

Know What You Believe
God's Plan For The Family
1 Peter 3.1-7

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[How important is your family? How important is your family to God? How important is your family to our culture?]

[Home as a Refuge]

[Dr. Lyman Abbott once said:]

["Blessed is the man whose home is a real refuge! who, being tossed to and fro on the waves of a tumultuous and combative sea throughout the day, leaves his office, his business perplexities behind him, and when he opens the door and enters the house, enters the landlocked harbor. But the home ought not to be a refuge for the husband and the father only, but we who are husbands and fathers ought to make it a refuge for the wives and mothers as well. They have their cares also, and when we come to our homes we ought to come bringing with us such a spirit as shall exorcise these cares and make home their refuge."1[1]]

[It seems in our contemporary culture that homes are anything but a harbor of rest. But they should be. Our evil world will lay many opinions concerning your home and family upon you. If there is anything our world shouts at us about our family's it is that they are unnecessary. But, Almighty God is the one who created families and He has a definite plan a purpose for the home. Today we will seek to discover God's plan for the Family.]

[Read Scripture]

[Recently, I was listening to Christian radio and I heard a Rabbi talking about the Jewish teachings and Hebrew language about the family. This Rabbi stated that contemporary families have lost the ancient teachings concerning what families ought to be. He said that the old Jewish traditions concerning the family and the old Hebrew meaning of the word family meant and taught **“service.”** Families

1[1] Richard A. Steele and Evelyn Stoner, comp., *Bible Illustrations – Heartwarming Bible Illustrations*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "353. Home as a Refuge".

were all about service and servanthood. Hence, Husband's ought to selflessly serve their wives. Wives ought to selflessly serve their husband's. Parents ought to selflessly serve their children. Children ought to selflessly serve their families. All of which will lead to a culture that seeks to serve one another.]

[In comparing these comments to the Bible and the teachings of Christ we discover dynamic support for this rabbi's position. Jesus said,]

[Mark 9:35³⁵ And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.]

[Matthew 20:26-28²⁶ But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.]

[The greatest Joys we will experience in our lives will be the joy we experience when we serve others. Hence, our families need to redevelop the heart of servanthood. Our homes will never be as intimate and as caring as when the members of the home strive to care and care for one another. This same spirit of selfless service will not only transform our home but it will transform our culture as people renew the heart and spirit of service in every aspect of their lives.]

[So, today we focus ourselves upon the family. Do you know what you believe about the family? What does God desire for your home?]

[Let us discover:]

A. God's Plan For The Family [- Even before the fall of Adam and Eve, God had a plan for the family.]

1. The Companionship Provided (Gen 2.18, 21-25) [- The Bible reveals that God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden and then said,]

[Genesis 2:18¹⁸ . . . It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.]

[Genesis 2:21-25²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;²² And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.²³ And Adam said, This is

now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.]

[God formed Eve out of Adam and then presented Eve to Adam. The picture is meant to express the kind of relationship Adam and Eve were intended to have. **God wanted them to have a relationship of intimacy, belonging, and unity.** They were to recognize that they were a part of one another and important to one another. Their companionship would comfort and encourage the couple as they walk through the Garden of Eden. **They were perfect people, in a perfect place, with a perfect provision, walking in a perfect presence.]**

2. **The Coupling Purposed (Gen 2.24; Matt 19.4-6)** [– An inseparable union.]

*[Genesis 2:24 ²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall **cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**]*

*[Matthew 19:4-6 ⁴ And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, **and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?** ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, **but one flesh.** What therefore **God hath joined together**, let not man put asunder.]*

[**Epoxy Glue** - God uses the word cleave to describe the union He intends for a husband and a wife. This word provides the picture of a two part glue being mixed together to provide the kind of bond that can never again be separated. Once the two parts of that glue are combined the can never be separated again.]

[God's plan is that a man and woman should come together in a covenant marriage relationship and that their marriage should endure through the duration of their lives.]

3. **The Compassion Promised (1 Cor 13.1-8)** [– The love of God in the tie that will bind husband's and wives together. This love is described as,]

[1 Corinthians 13:1-8¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.⁴ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.⁸ Charity never faileth: . . .]

[The love described in the love chapter (1 Cor 13) is not the worlds kind of love. This is a unique love provided to born again Christian by the indwelling presence of God within them. It is God divine provision so that God's divine plan for the family can be fully realized among His people.]

[Your Heavenly Father, through the redemption provided by our Lord Jesus Christ, has placed this supernatural love with in you. It is already presence within each and every born again Christian.]

- **[Do you realize this love of God is in you?** Most in our Christian churches know what this passage states, by they do not really believe it applies to them.]
- **[Will you nurture this love of God to maturity within you?** Until you realize what God has put in you and seek to allow it to grow and present itself through you, it will remain dormant in you. The greatest evidence of spiritual immaturity (carnality) in God's people is the lacking characteristic of God's love pouring from their lives. This is never more evident than it is in your marriage and home.]

B. Satan's Plan For The Family [- Just as God has a glorious purpose and plan for the family, the devil has a devouring plan for the family as well.]

1. **Satan Seeks To Separate (Gen 3.1; 1 Tim 2.13-15)** [- Early in the Bible we discover Satan's dastardly work upon the family. That old serpent waits until Adam and Eve are separated and he jumps upon the opportunity. Notice, how he talked to Eve,]

*[Genesis 3:1¹ Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. **And he said unto the woman**, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?]*

[Our spiritual adversary knows the strength and clearness of thought that accompanies unity and companionship. So, his devouring plan and purpose is the divide and conquer marriages, families, and communities. He tempts and deceives Eve while Adam is away. We know this because the Bible states,]

*1 Timothy 2:13-15¹³ For Adam was first formed, then Eve. ¹⁴ **And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.**¹⁵ Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*

[Satan deceived Eve when she stood alone. He divided and conquered Adam and Eve in numerous ways according to the Genesis account,]

- **[He Divided Eve By Separation** - He approached Eve when she was alone, when she was separated from Adam's companionship and counsel. You might think you are strong enough to stand on your own, but that is just one of the Devils divisive methods.]
- **[He Divided Eve By Sin** - In getting Eve to rebel against God Satan conquered Eve in two regards,]
 - o **[Eve was separated from God** – Eve's glorious relationship with almighty God was severed and she was condemned to die physically and spiritually as a result.]
 - o **[Eve was separated from Adam** – If Adam did not eat of the forbidden fruit then Eve would have been condemned alone and God's plan for the family and His creation was over. Lucifer would have succeeded in destroying eternally the family of Adam and Eve.]

[Christian's need to understand that the destruction of your family is a part of Satan's purpose and plan for your family. God intends to unify your marriage and your home, Satan intends to destroy and devour your home. Who is prevailing in your family.]

2. **Satan Seeks To Sever (Eph 5.28-32)** [- Satan desires to handicap God by handicapping God's body (The Church) by handicapping the home and thus destroying the foundation of any godly society. Satan proposes to do this devouring and destroying the family. Hence, we are reminded in Scripture,]

*[Ephesians 5:28-33 ²⁸ So ought men to love their wives **as their own bodies**. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ **For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.** ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.]*

[Satan's desires to devour your family and home by amputating your relationship with your spouse. Lucifer will lead you to believe that you would be better off without your husband or your wife. Satan's will send his advocates to convince you that you should just divorce that scoundrel you married and if you do then Satan has gained a victory by dividing your home through a surgical amputation.]

[It never ceases to surprise me who will give people the counsel of divorce,]

- [Godly parents will counsel their children to seek a divorce.]
- [Good friends and co-workers will counsel people to just get a divorce]
- [I have even heard of pastors counseling people to seek a divorce.]

[God's plan is not that your home should be divided. This why God says,]

[Matthew 19:6 ⁶ . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.]

[God intends for your family to be unified, joined together. It is Satan's plan and purpose to divide and sever your family. **Now, some of you here are already divorced and in many cases remarried.** The devil will try to jump all over you right now and will try to convince you that you can never again be used by God because of your broken marriage. You just recognize what God desires for your current marriage, ask God to forgive you for the

first broken home, and seek God's blessing in the marriage you are current engaged in. But don't you let Lucifer get the upper hand on you in this marriage. God will still bring you into His glorious plan for the family in your current marriage if you will seek it with diligence.

- C. **Scripture's Plan For The Family (1 Peter 3.7)** [- Having a marriage, family, and home like the one God purposes for all of His born again children is not only possible, it is promised by God. But, all of us live in a sinful and evil world; one with an adversary who relentlessly works to divide and destroy everything that our Heavenly Father has provided. God has revealed, repeatedly throughout Scripture, what both husband's and wives must do to realized God's purpose and plan for our families. The question is, **"Do you really want the kind of family God has planned for you?"**]

[The answer is, "Of course!"]

[Let's look at one Scripture, of the many available, that reveals how God's plan for the family can be fully realized. Now, this Scripture is clearly directed toward us men, but husband's and wives alike had better hear it clearly and hear it personally or God's intended plan for your family will only meet with our adversaries destruction. No man can bring His family into the blessedness of God's promises without the full, selfless, and sacrificial cooperation of his wife. Nor can a woman. There must be the cooperative, unified, passionate participation of both the husband and wife, and when there is God's glory is the result.]

[The passage reads:]

[1 Peter 3:7⁷ Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.]

1. **Be Passionately Present** [- . . . **dwell with them** according to knowledge, . . . – No relationship can long endure physical or psychological isolation. It is my opinion that a relationship will endure longer through a physical separation than it will a psychological separation. Husband's and wives must be purposefully present in their marriage relationship if their marriage is going to reflect God plan for the family.]

[Husband's and wives must spend purposeful time together. They must plan regular and bountiful times in each others company. **This is not only true between husbands and wives but it is necessary between fathers and their children and mothers and their children.**]

[Secluded Spouses – In our culture of prosperity and entertainment we have spouses and their children who live in the same houses by are nothing more than strangers who live in the same house. Most homes have a television in each room of the house; I even worked in one house that had a television in its bathroom. In many homes there are computers in each room of the house. Since we no longer like to watch the same programs together the result is that each person in the family goes into their own room and watches what they want to watch. While this does not seem all that bad, it has worked to alienated families from each other.]

[I am not saying you should just go home and get rid of all your technological devices. I am not trying to demonize your TV's and computer's, instead I am trying to say that you cannot isolate yourself from your family and have the home God purposes for you to have. **You must dwell with each other.**]

[Passionately Purposed Families – A family that will realize the incredible wonder of God's plan for the family must **Passionately Purpose** to be together. Father's and mother's must lead the way. There could be and should be,

- **[Purposeful Spiritual Training for the family.** Time spent in God's Word together as a family.]
- **[Purposeful Focused Time for the family.** Time spent being in each others company. Sharing with each other. Laughing with each other. Growing with each other.]

[I already know the problem people face. They think, hear, and say, "I'm bored." Isn't it sad that we have lost the value of being purposefully together. God's word teaches us that if we would experience the wonder of what God has planned for the family then we must be Passionately Present. **We must learn anew how to dwell together.**]

2. **Be Purposefully Positive (Eph 5.33)** [- . . . *giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, . . .* – Honor, respect and love are all marks of a healthy God centered relationship. I am reminded of the Song of Solomon and the relationship presented in that book of the Bible. Solomon and the Shulamite woman had nothing but kind and enduring words to say about each other. Christain's who would live in the kind of home that God has purposed for the family must learn to talk with and about each other in purposefully positive language.]

[Husband must Love and Protect their wives – Husband's must learn to love their wives and honor their wives in encouraging ways.]

[Ephesians 5:33³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.]

[Men must love their wives as they love their own bodies. How do we demonstrate love for our own bodies? By taking care of our selves. If we get hurt we mend our wound. If we get hungry we feed ourselves. If we get stinky we wash ourselves or at least we should. The point is we take some time and care for ourselves.]

[For most men, showing the kind of care and love that our wives need does not come naturally; it is learned behavior. It is something that men must purpose to do. But, if you develop the habit if caring affectionately for your wife, the benefits are incalculable. Husband's who are purposefully positive toward their wives will find themselves developing the kind of family that God has plan for them.]

[Wives Must Honor and Respect their husbands]

[Proverbs 31:11¹¹ The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.]

[Wives, be absolutely sure that you never dishonor, disrespect, or disregard your husband. Especially when you feel hurt or angry toward your husband. Leave any spirit of vengeance at home. There will be times that you feel your husband is not treating you right, you keep that between you and your husband.]

[Purposefully Punitive – To many marriage relationships have become Purposefully Punitive rather than Purposefully Positive. Husbands and

Wives have decided the justice toward their spouse is more important than their unity in life. Instead of being quick to forgive and maintain a wholesome relationship they both harbor hurt and bitterness in their hearts and, in essence, say, **“I’ll show Him or Her, boy am I going to make you miserable!”**

[You will never be more like the devil and less like your Savior than when you work to divide your marriage and your home.]

3. Be Profoundly Peculiar (Eph 5.32) [- . . . *as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*]

[Marriage is more than our world’s mere civil union. Marriage for a Christian is supposed to be a reflection of the dynamic union between our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.]

[Ephesians 5:32³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.]

[Your marriage is supposed to demonstrate the incredible union that every born again Christian can have with their Lord and Savior. But today, many marriages are a reflection of the brokenness of the relationship between Christ and His Church.]

[In many homes,]

- [Love has been replaced by indifference.]
- [Harmony has been replaced with disputes.]
- [Commitment has been replaced with immorality. For some this means adultery, for many it means fleshly lust entertained through programming, pornography, or other devastating desires that destroy relationships, intimacy, and the home.]

[Christian need to recognize God’s Plan For The Family which is relentlessly attacked by our adversary, the Devil. You can have a home that realizes the harmony and joy that your Heavenly Father intends for you. But if you will have a home blessed by God, then you must passionately pursue it with purpose.]

[Where is your home today?]

[What does your home reflect?]

[Will you have a Profoundly Peculiar Christian marriage and home?]

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